From: David Bloomgren/DC/USEPA/US
Sent: 8/22/2012 4:42:23 PM

To: "bscriber@ngs.org" <bscriber@ngs.org>
CC:
BCC: Dayna Gibbons
Subject: Dimock Follow-Up

Hi Brad -

Following up on our conversation. Here is the link to our release on the conclusion of the Dimock investigation:

http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/1A6E49D193E1007585257A46005B61AD

And some Q&A's on methane below. As I mentioned, I'm traveling tomorrow and Friday but will be checking blackberry and can help answer any follow-ups you may have. If for some reason you cannot reach me you can reach out to Terri White (white.terri-a@epa.gov (215) 814-5567) in our Region 3 press office who is up to speed on Dimock.

Q: What were EPA's methane findings in the two rounds of sampling?

A: Five of the wells sampled presented a level of methane above the federal Office of Surface Mining's screening level of 28 parts per million. At the time of EPA's sampling, two of these homes were receiving alternate sources of drinking water from Cabot. All of these residents were advised of the methane results and the results were also shared with PADEP and the Susquehanna County Emergency Management Agency. All of these residents were already aware that their water contained levels of methane.

Q: What about methane levels?
A: There is no MCL for methane, and neither EPA nor PADEP nor ATSDR believes there is a health threat from ingestion of methane in the human body. With regard to safety concerns, EPA selected a screening level used by the federal Office of Surface Mining (OSM) of 28 parts per million (ppm) for dissolved methane in drinking water. Twenty-eight ppm is the maximum level of methane that can be dissolved in water before the methane leaves solution and enters the air as a gas. Methane is not explosive while in solution, and OSM reports that methane in water does not impair the odor, taste or color nor does it affect in any way the potability of the water. The potential for methane in air to create an explosive environment depends on a number of factors, such as: the concentration, the volume of the space and frequency of air exchanges in the space. Proper room ventilation will ensure that methane levels in indoor air do not present a safety hazard.
As part of our sampling efforts, when a well was found to have methane levels above 28 ppm, we notified the resident, the state, and the county emergency management agency. EPA found levels of methane at or above the 28 ppm level at a total of five of the 64 homes overall. Two of these wells were not connected to the residences at the time of the sample because the residents were receiving alternate water from Cabot. At a third home, the resident does not use the well which is located in the basement of the home but vented to the atmosphere. At these three homes as well as two other residences where the water was being used in the home the residents have been notified by EPA of our results and the residents indicated they were already aware that their water contained levels of methane. EPA also notified Pennsylvania DEP and the Susquehanna County EMA, and can work with local officials to provide recommendations to affected residents in the event that use of well water is resumed.

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Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy